

THE SPIEGEL AFFAIR AND THE WEST GERMAN PRESS: THE INITIAL PHASE*

BY RONALD F. BUNN

Among the many consequences of the arrest by West German authorities of editors of the magazine *Der Spiegel* for allegedly traitorously revealing state secrets, one was the vociferous reaction of the West German press. Here is an example of the use of content analysis to study press reaction in a case of this kind.

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BETWEEN 8:30 and 9:00 P.M. of October 26, 1962, attorneys of the West German Federal Prosecutor's Office, assisted by the Hamburg criminal police and officers of the Security Group of the Federal Criminal Office, converged on the Hamburg and Bonn offices of the news magazine *Der Spiegel*. Three members of the staff were taken into immediate custody. Rudolf Augstein, the publisher, could not be located that evening by the police, but upon learning of the warrant for his arrest he turned himself in to the authorities on the following day. Conrad Ahlers, an associate editor, was vacationing with his wife in Spain. In the early hours of October 27, 1962, he was taken into "provisional custody" by Spanish police and returned to West Germany, where he was promptly arrested. In the weeks that followed, additional arrests were made, including those of Colonel Alfred Martin of the Federal Defense Ministry and Colonel Adolf Wicht of the Federal Intelligence Agency (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*). The Hamburg offices of *Der Spiegel* were placed under surveillance, and for some thirty days federal investigators searched the files and archives. On the morning following the raids and initial arrests, the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe announced that the action had been prompted by the publication in *Der Spiegel* of "state secrets" in such a way as to "endanger the security of the Federal Republic as well as the safety and freedom of the German people." Spokesmen for the Federal Prosecutor's Office explained that the

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